

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHOSA URGES COMMUNITIES TO REPORT ANY CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES AGAINST TOURISTS IN MPUMALANGA

Marite – Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Mrs YN ‘Pinky’ Phosa has denounced crime leveled against tourists visiting the province during the Tourism Safety Awareness Campaign held at the Marite Soccer Stadium in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality

In an effort to demonstrate government’s commitment towards fighting crime perpetuated against tourist in the Province, MEC Phosa visited the area of Bushbuckridge where she urged members of the local community to report any suspicious criminal activity that may be directed at tourists to the law enforcement agencies. This, she said, is to ensure that tourists enjoy the scenic beauty of Mpumalanga, rather than worry about being robbed.

Addressing members of the community in the Marite soccer stadium, the MEC began by raising government’s concern at the high number of criminal activities directed at tourists in the area. Phosa also warned the community about the impact of crime against tourists. The MEC further alluded to the importance of the tourism sector in developing and taking Mpumalanga forward.

“The escalating criminal activities against tourists in the Province will lead tourists to never consider Mpumalanga as a destination, and this will negatively impact on our tourism establishments, and subsequently the livelihoods of local communities working in those establishments. The ANC-led government can no longer allow criminal activities against tourists to derail the growth of the tourism sector. Just to remind you, the tourism sector is one of the pillars in the MEGDP (Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Programme), and therefore plays an important role in taking the Province forward”, said MEC Phosa.

Phosa further urged communities to work together with the police to ensure that those who rob tourists are arrested, and face the might of the criminal justice system in order to create an environment where the tourism sector can attract investors so that the industry can flourish.

“I urge our communities to support the police efforts to bring the perpetrators of crimes against tourists to book, so that the tourism sector can flourish and attract more investors. I am confident that working together with all our people, stakeholders in the tourism sector and the police, we will be able to create more job opportunities in the tourism sector for the people of Mpumalanga,” Phosa urged the community.

The MECs sentiments were also echoed by the CEO of Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), Mr. Jacque Modipane when he said “I am pleading community members around the Province to defend our tourism industry from criminals, and assist government to position Mpumalanga to reap the benefits of its natural resources by reporting suspicious criminal activities directed at tourists and tourism establishments to the police”.



Mr. Modipane further alluded to the benefits of the tourism industry in creating the much needed jobs in the Province, indicating the role of the tourism industry in the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path.

“The tourism sector does contribute to the creation of the much needed jobs. The Province, through the ANC-led government, is currently hard at work implementing the MEGDP, in which tourism plays an important role towards successful job creation. But the alarming level of crime against tourists has the potential to derail government’s efforts in creating the much needed jobs,” added Mr. Modipane

Speaking on behalf of the MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Crime Prevention and Community Police Relations Acting General Manager, Mr Bongani Kubhayi warned that the ANC government will do everything necessary to arrest those perpetrating crime against tourists and the people of Mpumalanga.

“The indications are that there seems to be a decline in many crime categories in Mpumalanga, but the most worrying is that crimes against tourists around the Hazyview area seems to be on the increase. And as the police, we will not spare any efforts to hunt and arrest the perpetrators of this crime against tourists and the people of Mpumalanga,” warned Khubhayi.

Khubhayi encouraged the people of the Province to look after tourists and not to allow rogue elements to tarnish the good image of Mpumalanga, as one of the leading and favoured tourist destination.

“We must make it our responsibilities to look after tourists, we must never allow few rogue elements to tarnish the good image of our Province as one of the leading and favoured tourist destination. When these rogue elements attack tourists, they scare potential investors away and this will negatively affect government’s efforts towards job creation in the province,” concluded Kubhayi.

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Issued by the Directorate Communication
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